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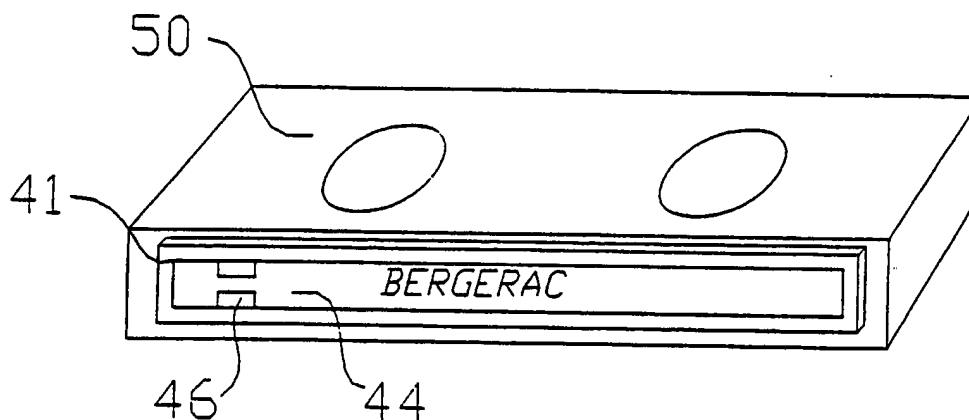
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(54) Title: LABELS



(57) Abstract

A video tape cassette (50) has a label (41) secured thereto, along one edge of the cassette (50). The label (41) has a display assembly (44) upon which there may be written a title of a film - e.g. by pressure applied by a stylo. The title (or other information) may be erased by sliding a cursor (having tabs (46)) along the display assembly (44). Thus, information can readily be written on the label (41), erased, and replaced. Labels such as (41) may be applied to other articles.

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LABELS

This invention relates to labels, and is concerned particularly although not exclusively with labels for containers for recording media.

5

Video cassette recorders are in wide use at the present time. In addition to playing back pre-recorded video cassettes, most users have a collection of blank cassettes on which they record various programmes to be watched at a later time. Very often, such cassettes are re-used, to record a
10 new programme over a previously recorded programme.

It is convenient to be able to label such video cassettes, so that a user can readily locate a programme to be watched. Typically, a small number of self-adhesive labels are provided with each video cassette, so that the user can
15 apply these to the cassette itself, and/or to a case for the cassette. However such self-adhesive labels are not always terribly convenient. They are usually kept separately from the cassette and/or its case and, especially in the home, they have usually become lost or misplaced by the time that it is required to use them. If an assiduous video cassette user conscientiously applies new self-
20 adhesive labels upon each re-use of a cassette, the successive labels can build up to an undesirable thickness.

Preferred embodiments of the invention aim to provide labels for video cassettes and/or their cases, which may be improved in the foregoing respects.
25 However, the invention may have more general application.

More generally, according to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a label comprising a re-usable mechanical display medium

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which is adapted to display writing thereon in response to a first mechanical stimulus and to be wiped clean for re-use in response to a second mechanical stimulus.

5 Preferably, said mechanical display comprises first and second layers arranged to display writing when they are pressed together and to erase any such writing when they are separated; and separating means for selectively separating the first and second layers.

10 Preferably, said second layer contains a colorant and said first layer overlays the second layer and is arranged to be written upon by a user such that a user's writing pressure serves to urge the first and second layers together at local regions where pressure is applied, thereby to define written characters, and the first layer has sufficient transparency to enable the
15 characters thus written to be seen.

Preferably, said colorant comprises graphite.

20 Preferably, said separating means comprises a cursor, and the cursor and first and second layers are so arranged as to afford relative sliding movement between the cursor and said layers.

25 Preferably, in use, said layers remain stationary in relation to an object to which the label is affixed, and said cursor is moveable relative to said layers.

Preferably, in plan view, the cursor does not extend beyond the periphery of the label.

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Preferably, in plan view, said label is oblong in shape.

A label in accordance with the first aspect of the invention may include affixing means for affixing the label to an object to be labelled.

5

Preferably, said affixing means comprises at least one self-adhesive area provided on the label.

According to a second aspect of the invention, there is provided a
10 container provided with a label in accordance with the first aspect of the invention.

The label may be provided as an integral part of the container.

15 The container may be a container for a recording medium.

The container may contain a recording medium.

The container may comprise a video cassette.
20

The container may comprise a case for holding a cassette which contains a recording medium.

Such a cassette may be a video cassette.
25

In a third aspect, the invention provides a method of applying a label to a container, the method comprising the step of applying to the container a label in accordance with the first aspect of the invention.

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Preferably, the container contains a recording medium.

For a better understanding of the invention, and to show how the same may be carried into effect, reference will now be made, by way of example, to the accompanying diagrammatic drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a plan view of a first example of a label embodying the present invention;

Figure 2 is a sectional detail view taken on the line II-II of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a view similar to Figure 1, but showing a second example of a label;

Figure 4 is a view similar to Figure 1, but showing a third example of a label;

Figure 5 is one example of a bottom plan view of the label of Figure 4;

Figure 6 is a perspective view of a video cassette with a label of the type shown in Figures 4 and 5 attached thereto; and

Figure 7 is a perspective view of a case for a video cassette, incorporating a label of the type shown in Figures 4 and 5.

The label 1 that is shown in Figures 1 and 2 comprises a body 2 having a window 3 on an upper surface thereof, a display assembly 4 which is

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slidable mounted in the body 2, and a cursor 5 which is fixedly mounted in the body 2.

5 The display assembly 4 comprises a first layer 6 disposed over a second layer 7, a third layer 8 disposed over the first layer 6, and a backing web 9 disposed below the second layer 7.

10 The second layer contains a colorant and, for example, may comprise a paper material (or plastics) that is impregnated with graphite. The first layer 6 comprises an opaque paper and/or plastics material. The third layer 8 comprises a transparent plastics material. The backing web 9 may be of stiff card, or any other suitable material to provide support for the second layer 7.

15 In use, the display assembly 4 may be slid between a first end position, in which it is contained completely or mostly within the outline of the housing 2, when seen in plan view, and a second end position, in which it is extended fully to the right (as seen in Figure 1), at which point the cursor 5 in the housing 2 is positioned adjacent the left end 10 of the display assembly 4.

20

In use, the display assembly 4 is normally slid into its first end position, so that it is fully contained within the housing 2. Upon writing on the third layer 8 by means of a suitable implement (e.g. a pen, pencil or stylus), pressure is applied through the third layer 8 to urge the first and second layers 6 and 7 together. The writing force is reacted by the backing web 9. Where the first and second layers 6 and 7 are pressed together, the colorant in the second layer 7 shows through the first layer 6, to show written characters on the display assembly 4.

25

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When the display assembly 4 is subsequently pulled to the right, out of the housing 2 (as seen in Figure 1), the cursor 5 serves to separate the first and second layers 6 and 7, thus removing the writing from the display assembly 4. Upon sliding the display assembly 4 back into the housing 2, it is ready to be written upon again, to display new written characters.

The first to third layers 6, 7, 8 and the backing web 9 are secured together at the first and second ends 10, 11 of the display assembly 4. However, between the ends 10 and 11, the components 6 to 9 are not joined together. It would be of little significance if, alternatively, the first and third layers 6 and 8 were secured together along their whole length, or the second layer 7 were secured to the backing web 9 along its whole length. Indeed, the first and third layers 6, 8 may be replaced by a single layer of suitable material - as may the second layer and backing web 7, 9. The main thing is that the first and second layers 6 and 7 are capable of being separated by the cursor 5.

The second example of a label shown as 31 in Figure 3 operates in a generally similar manner to the label 1 of Figures 1 and 2. Thus, the label 31 comprises a housing 32 having a window 33 therein and, located such that it shows through the window 33, a display assembly 34. The construction of the display assembly 34 may be generally similar to that of the display assembly 4 of Figures 1 and 2.

However, in Figure 3, the display assembly 34 is fixed relative to the housing 32. A moveable cursor 35 is slidably mounted in the housing 32, for sliding movement between the longitudinal ends of the housing 32. At either end of the cursor 35 there is provided a respective tab which projects laterally

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of the housing 32, and which may be held by an operator in order to move the cursor 35 along the housing 32.

5 In use, characters are written on the display assembly 34 in a similar manner to that described above with reference to Figures 1 and 2. The written characters are subsequently removed, by sliding the cursor 35 along the housing 32, to separate layers similar to the first and second layers 6 and 7 shown in Figure 2.

10 The third example of a label 41, as shown in Figure 4, is generally similar to the label 31 of Figure 3. Thus, it has a housing 42 having a window 43 through which appears a display assembly 44 which is generally similar to the display assembly 34 of Figure 3. A cursor 45 is mounted for longitudinal sliding movement along the housing 42, between layers of the display device 44 which are similar to the first and second layers 6 and 7 as shown in Figure 2.

In the label 41 of Figure 4, however, the cursor 45 is provided with operating tabs 46 which, in this example, project inwardly, within the window 43. Thus, the label 41 may be particularly compact, without projections which may become broken. In particular, when the label 41 is seen in plan view, the cursor 45 and its tabs 46 do not project beyond the periphery of the label 41. Moreover, as seen in side view, the tabs 46 may not project above the upper surface of the housing 42.

25

As shown in Figure 5, the underside of the housing 42 may be provided with two self-adhesive stickers 47, by means of which the label 41 may readily be attached to a surface of an object to be labelled.

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Figure 6 shows an example of such an object labelled with the label 41. In this example, the object is a video tape cassette 50, to one edge of which the label 41 has been secured by means of the self-adhesive stickers 47. As may be seen in Figure 6, the label 41 may be used to display the title of a programme that has been recorded on the video cassette 50. When the cassette is re-used to record another programme, the previous title may simply be removed by sliding the cursor tabs 46 from one end of the label 41 to the other. A new title can then be written on the display assembly 44.

Figure 7 shows another object with a label of the type shown in Figures 4 and 5 integrated into it. In this example, the object is a video cassette case 60, and the label 61 has been built into the spine 62 of the case 60. The label 61 may be used in a similar manner to the label 41 shown in Figure 6.

Although labels have been illustrated and described above in use with labelling video cassettes and cases, such labels and other labels in accordance with the invention may be used in other applications. For example, they may be used in service-type applications - e.g. recording when fresh batteries were last fitted, or when a next service is necessary.

It is to be understood that various modifications may be made to the various embodiments of the invention that are mentioned above and/or illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Just by way of example, the two tabs 46 in Figure 4 may be replaced by a single bar extending the full width of the window 43. In Figure 5, the self-adhesive stickers 47 may be replaced by a coating of adhesive material which is applied to the entire under surface of the housing 42, and is protected until needed by a peel-off strip.

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When writing on the illustrated labels, only light localised pressure is required and it is unnecessary, and perhaps undesirable, to leave any residue, such as ink, on the writing surface layer 8 of the label. Conventional writing implements are unnecessary, and writing may be made even by a finger nail or an empty ball-point pen.

A simple, extremely cheap stylus with a rounded tip could be supplied with each label, each container having an integrated label, or a pack of stick-on labels. The housing such as 2, 32, 42 (or container 50, 60 with integrated label) could be provided with means for neatly storing such a stylus - e.g. by magnetic means, clip means, and/or a storage space in the housing such as 2, 32, 42 or container such as 50, 60 itself.

In modifications of the embodiment of Figure 6 and/or 7, the label 41, 61 may substantially fill the spine of the container 50, 60 except, perhaps, where a storage space for a stylus is provided beside the label 41, 61.

Objects such as 50, 60 provided with labels such as 1, 31, 41, 61 may provide sufficient backing for the colorant layers such as 7, without the need for an additional backing web such as 9.

The illustrated embodiments of the invention employ a label of the type comprising two layers which are selectively pressed together to show written characters and then separated to wipe the writing surface clear, and this is particularly advantageous. However, other mechanical display means are possible. For example, a display of a type as disclosed in British Patent No 915731 (or a modification thereof) may be employed - in particular, a method of clearing a display by shaking it. Within the term "mechanical display"

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there may be included displays in which characters are written by strokes of a stylus which varies a magnetic or electric field, and the display wiped for re-use by application of another (e.g. uniform) magnetic or electric field.

5 The reader's attention is directed to all papers and documents which are filed concurrently with or previous to this specification in connection with this application and which are open to public inspection with this specification, and the contents of all such papers and documents are incorporated herein by reference.

10

 All of the features disclosed in this specification (including any accompanying claims, abstract and drawings), and/or all of the steps of any method or process so disclosed, may be combined in any combination, except combinations where at least some of such features and/or steps are mutually
15 exclusive.

 Each feature disclosed in this specification (including any accompanying claims, abstract and drawings), may be replaced by alternative features serving the same, equivalent or similar purpose, unless expressly
20 stated otherwise. Thus, unless expressly stated otherwise, each feature disclosed is one example only of a generic series of equivalent or similar features.

 The invention is not restricted to the details of the foregoing
25 embodiment(s). The invention extends to any novel one, or any novel combination, of the features disclosed in this specification (including any accompanying claims, abstract and drawings), or to any novel one, or any novel combination, of the steps of any method or process so disclosed.

CLAIMS

1. A label comprising a re-usable mechanical display medium which is adapted to display writing thereon in response to a first mechanical stimulus
5 and to be wiped clean for re-use in response to a second mechanical stimulus.
2. A label according to claim 1, wherein said mechanical display comprises first and second layers arranged to display writing when they are pressed together and to erase any such writing when they are separated; and
10 separating means for selectively separating the first and second layers.
3. A label according to claim 2, wherein said second layer contains a colorant and said first layer overlays the second layer and is arranged to be written upon by a user such that a user's writing pressure serves to urge the
15 first and second layers together at local regions where pressure is applied, thereby to define written characters, and the first layer has sufficient transparency to enable the characters thus written to be seen.
4. A label according to claim 3, wherein said colorant comprises graphite.
20
5. A label according to claim 2, 3 or 4, wherein said separating means comprises a cursor, and the cursor and first and second layers are so arranged as to afford relative sliding movement between the cursor and said layers.
- 25 6. A label according to claim 5, wherein, in use, said layers remain stationary in relation to an object to which the label is affixed, and said cursor is moveable relative to said layers.

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7. A label according to claim 6, wherein, in plan view, the cursor does not extend beyond the periphery of the label.
8. A label according to any of the preceding claims, wherein, in plan
5 view, said label is oblong in shape.
9. A label according to any of the preceding claims, including affixing means for affixing the label to an object to be labelled.
- 10 10. A label according to claim 9, wherein said affixing means comprises at least one self-adhesive area provided on the label.
11. A label substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figures 1 and 2, Figure 3 or Figure 4, optionally as modified by Figure 5, of
15 the accompanying drawings.
12. A container provided with a label according to any of the preceding claims.
- 20 13. A container provided with a label according to any of claims 1 to 8, the label being provided as an integral part of the container.
14. A container according to claim 12 or 13, being a container for a recording medium.
- 25 15. A container according to claim 14, containing a recording medium.
16. A container according to claim 15, comprising a video cassette.

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17. A container according to claim 12 or 13, comprising a case for holding a cassette which contains a recording medium.
18. A container according to claim 17, wherein said cassette is a video
5 cassette.
19. A recording medium cassette provided with a label, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figure 6 of the accompanying drawings.
10
20. A case for a recording medium cassette, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figure 7 of the accompanying drawings.
21. A method of applying a label to a container, the method comprising the
15 step of applying to the container a label according to any of claims 1 to 11.
22. A method according to claim 21, wherein the container contains a recording medium.

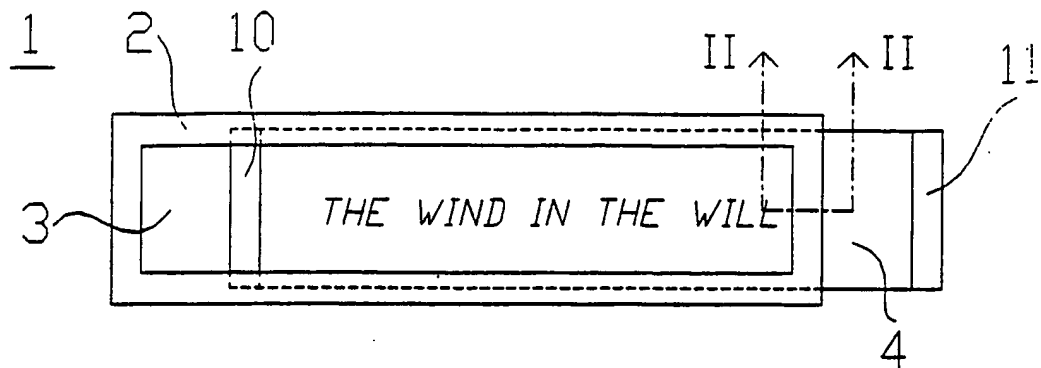


FIG. 1

FIG. 2

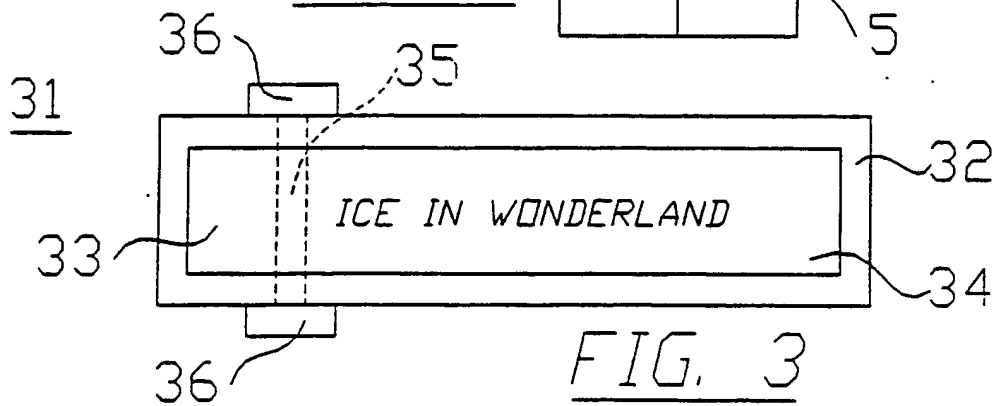
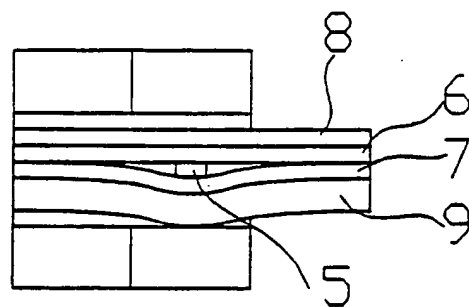


FIG. 3

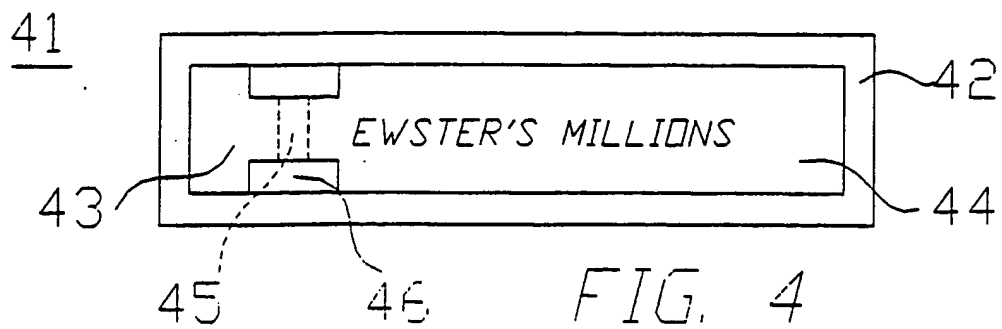
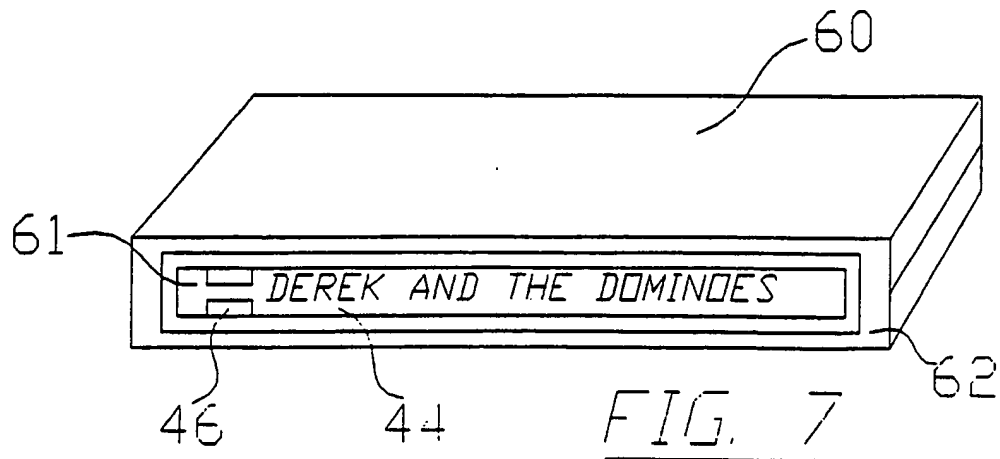
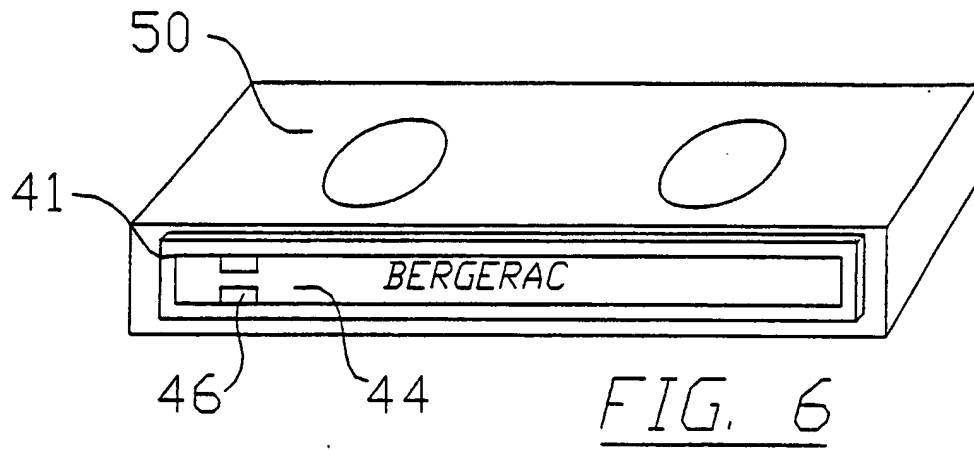
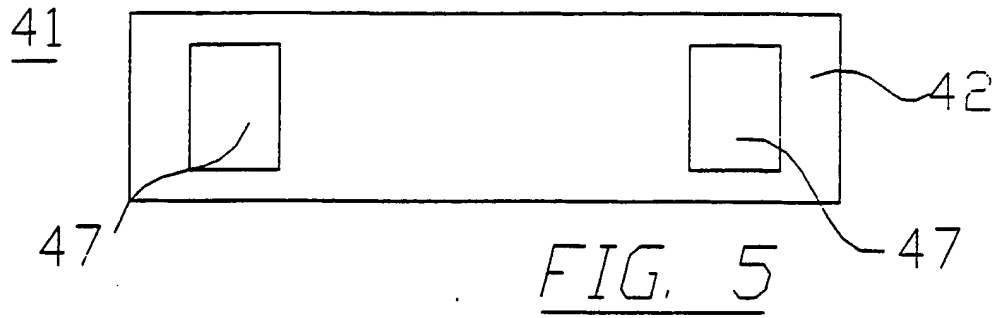


FIG. 4

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

PCT/GB 92/01102

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ⁶ According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC IPC ⁵ : G 11 B 23/36														
II. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum Documentation Searched ⁷ <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 30%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Classification System</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Classification Symbols</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">IPC⁵</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">G 11 B 23/00, B 43 L 1/12</td> </tr> </table> Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the extent that such Documents are included in the Fields Searched ⁸			Classification System	Classification Symbols	IPC ⁵	G 11 B 23/00, B 43 L 1/12								
Classification System	Classification Symbols													
IPC ⁵	G 11 B 23/00, B 43 L 1/12													
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT⁹ <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 10%; padding: 5px;">Category ⁹</th> <th style="width: 60%; padding: 5px;">Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²</th> <th style="width: 30%; padding: 5px;">Relevant to Claim No. ¹³</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;">X</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">GB, A, 0 780 173 (LESWICK LTD.) 31 July 1957 (31.07.57), see fig. 1,2; claims 1-3. ---</td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;">1-3, 5-8</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;">X</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">GB, A, 1 389 438 (MARION AND FOULGER LTD.) 03 April 1975 (03.04.75), see fig. 1-5; claims 1-8. ---</td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;">1-3, 5-8</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;">X</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">US, A, 2 359 195 (BERLINER M. et al.) 26 September 1944 (26.09.44), see fig. 1-9; claims 1-5. ----</td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;">1-3, 5-8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Category ⁹	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³	X	GB, A, 0 780 173 (LESWICK LTD.) 31 July 1957 (31.07.57), see fig. 1,2; claims 1-3. ---	1-3, 5-8	X	GB, A, 1 389 438 (MARION AND FOULGER LTD.) 03 April 1975 (03.04.75), see fig. 1-5; claims 1-8. ---	1-3, 5-8	X	US, A, 2 359 195 (BERLINER M. et al.) 26 September 1944 (26.09.44), see fig. 1-9; claims 1-5. ----	1-3, 5-8
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[*] Special categories of cited documents: ¹⁰ ^{"A"} document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance ^{"E"} earlier document but published on or after the international filing date ^{"L"} document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) ^{"O"} document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means ^{"P"} document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed ^{"T"} later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention ^{"X"} document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step ^{"Y"} document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art. ^{"4"} document member of the same patent family														
IV. CERTIFICATION <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search 21 August 1992 </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> Date of Mailing of this International Search Report 04 SEP 1992 </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> International Searching Authority EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> Signature of Authorized Officer BERGER e.h. </td> </tr> </table>			Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search 21 August 1992	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report 04 SEP 1992	International Searching Authority EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE	Signature of Authorized Officer BERGER e.h.								
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ANHANG

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bericht über die internationale
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ANNEX

to the International Search
Report to the International Patent
Application No.

ANNEXE

au rapport de recherche inter-
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international n°

PCT/GB 92/01102 SAE 60678

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GB A 780173		keine - none - rien	
GB A 1389438	03-04-75	keine - none - rien	
US A 2359195		keine - none - rien	